

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SIL-01 LAB-04 CU-02 /074 W

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P R 110700Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1035

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

USEC BRUSSELS 1006

US MISSION GENEVA 638

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 937

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP

SUBJ: GOVT STATEMENT RE PUBLIC ORDER

REF: A. MADRID 851

B. MADRID 826

BEGIN SUMMARY: TOUGH STATEMENT BY INFORMATION MINISTER
HERRERA RE PUBLIC ORDER FOLLOWING FEB 7 CABINET MEETING,
HAS PROMPTED SPECULATION GOVT IS CONCERNED WITH AN EROSION
OF ITS AUTHORITY IN LIGHT OF CURRENT LABOR, UNIVERSITY,
AND POLITICAL SITUATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON FEB 7, FOLLOWING WEEKLY CABINET MEETING, MINISTER OF
INFORMATON LEOMPGZRRERA MADE A STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF
GOVT REFERRING TO QUESTION OF PUBLIC ORDER, WHICH STATEMENT
HAS BEEN GIVEN MUCH PROMINENCE IN PRESS.

2. HERRERA, REFERRING TO CURRENT "LEVEL OF ABNORMALITY"

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IN UNIVERSITIES, AMONG SHOP KEEPERS, AMONG ACTORS AND

ACTRESSES, ETC., STATED "THE GOVT IS AWARE THAT IT IS BEING SUBMITTED TO A POLITICAL CHALLENGE, WHATEVER THE APPEARANCE OF THE FACTS MAY BE, OF A SUBVERSIVE CHARACTER, A CHALLENGE AGAINST THE STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS".

HERRERA CONTINUED THAT GOVT HAD SUFFICIENT INFO WITH RESPECT TO NATURE, DATES, AND ORIGIN OF DIFFERENT "ABNORMALITIES" AND LAMENTED THAT THERE ARE SOME GROUPS AND PERSONS WHO IN GOOD FAITH HAVE LENT THEMSELVES TO FURTHERANCE OF EXISTING TENSIONS.

3. HERRERA STATED THE GOVT'S POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT AS FOLLOWS "FIRST-THE GOVT IS AWARE THAT IT HAS SUFFICIENT MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL FOR AN ADEQUATE AND PRUDENT RESPONSE TO THIS POLITICAL CHALLENGE. SECOND-THE GOVT WILL NOT GIVE UNDER ANY PRESSURES. THIRD-SUFFICIENT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ASSURE PUBLIC ORDER AND THE PACIFIC CO-EXISTENCE OF ALL SPANIARDS".

4. IN SUBSEQUENT QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD, HERRERA WAS ASKED WHETHER THE GOVT HAD CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF DECLARING STATE OF EXCEPTION, TO WHICH HERRERA RESPONDED THAT THE GOVT HAS NOT CONSIDERED SUCH A POSSIBILITY , SINCE, AT LEAST AT PRESENT, IT DOES NOT BELIEVE IT NECESSARY TO RESORT TO SUCH MEASURES".

5. COMMENT: THIS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING DECLARATION BY GOVT AFTER ITS CABINET MEETING, HAS LED TO RUMORS THAT GOVT, IN VIEW OF RECENT LABOR, UNIVERSITY, AND POLITICAL SITUATIONS, AND PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF CURRENT AND RECENT STRIKES AND WORK STOPPAGES AMONG SUCH CRITICAL AREAS AS GOVT WORKERS LAST WEEK AS WELL AS AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ACTING PROFESSION (REF A), IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH WHAT MAY BE AN EROSION OF ITS AUTHORITY. (PRESS EDITORIALS HAVE ALSO RAISED THIS QUESTION.) AS A MINIMUM GOVT FELT THAT SITUATION WAS SUCH THAT IT HAD TO SPEAK OUT AND REASSERT ITS AUTHORITY. GOVT'S DENIAL OF PLANS FOR STATE OF EXCEPTION SEEN BY SOME AS CONFIRMATION THAT SUCH MEASURE WAS AT LEAST CONSIDERED.

6. IT APPEARS THAT GOVT MAY BE SOMEWHAT OVERREACTING TO A SITUATION WHICH, WHILE IT DOES POSE SOME DISTURBING AND CONFIDENTIAL

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POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS PROBLEMS, HAS CERTAINLY NOT REACHED PHASE WHERE IT POSES A SERIOUS DANGER TO GOVT ITSELF. GOVT STATEMENTS WOULD ALSO SEEK TO IMPLY THAT THERE IS A MASTER PLOT BEHIND LABOR DISPUTES AND PROBLEMS IN THE UNIVERSITIES DESIGNED TO TOPPLE GOVT, WHEREAS IT APPEARS THAT THESE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS HAVE A MOMENTUM AND DYNAMIC OF THEIR OWN.

7. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS PERHAPS DEFENSIVE POSTURE ON PART OF GOVT INCLUDE (A) UNCONFIRMED RUMORS THAT GENERAL FRANCO'S HEALTH MAY HAVE BEEN SLIPPING IN PAST WEEK OR SO (SEPTTEL WILL DEAL WITH THIS MORE FULLY) (B) RUMORS OF DISSENTION WITHIN CABINET ALONG WITH NEW RIGHTIST PRESSURES ON ARIAS, MOST LIKELY OVER POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS ISSUE, (C) RECENT INCIDENTS AFFECTING PUBLIC ORDER, PRINCIPALLY IN BASQUE COUNTRY; (D) APPEALS HEARING ON "CARABANCHEL TEN" CASE, SCHEDULED BEFORE SPAIN'S SUPREME COURT ON FEB 11, WHICH SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF PRESTIGIOUS INT'L OBSERVERS WILL ATTEND (REF B), (E) CLOSURE A FEW DAYS AGO OF VALLODOLID UNIVERSITY FOR REST OF ACADEMIC YEAR DUE STUDENT DISORDERS; AND (F) UNCOVERING ON FEB 7-8 OF AN ALLEGED RING OF TROTSKYITE AND ETA ACTIVISTS.

8. IN MEANTIME, LABOR SITUATION APPEARS STATIONARY IN SOME AREAS, AND HAS SUBSIDED SOMEWHAT IN OTHERS. STRIKE OF ACTORS AND ACTRESSES, WHICH IS NEARLY WEEK OLD, CONTINUES UNABATED, HOWEVER, ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OF ACTORS OWN NON-OFFICIAL REPS IN PLACE OF OFFICIAL SYNDICAL REPRESENTATIVES REMAINS KEY ISSUE. LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN ACTORS STRIKE WAS ON FEB 8, WHEN SOME 8 ACTORS WERE ARRESTED FOR THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN CURRENT DISPUTE AND GIVEN HEAVY FINES. SINCE THAT DATE, AT LEAST 54 OF THE ACTORS HAVE BEEN GIVEN PROVISIONAL LIBERTY, WHEREAS OTHER 4 REPORTEDLY STILL REMAIN IN JAIL. AMONG THOSE DETAINED ARE SEVERAL ACTORS RATHER PROMINENT IN MADRID ACTING AND INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY.
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